Students Speak Out Against Anti-LGBTQ Practices at BYU

BY DIEGO HIGUERA

Brigham Young University seems so far from Chula Vista. It is 713 miles away, an 11-hour drive through four states. Culturally, it is a slight year from diverse, progressive South San Diego County. BYU is in the heart of red state Utah, a bastion of conservative politics since the late 1840s.

BYU seems like the last place a kid from the South Bay would want to attend, but there is a quiet pipeline from our multiracial blue coastal strip to the “Mormon Harvard.” There may be as many as 14,000 Mormons in the South County who have high regard for BYU’s deserved reputation as an excellent academic university with an affordable price tag. Often, though, culture shock consumes BYU’s overwhelmed LGBTQ students. Ugliness ensues.

Last semester when campus clubs and student organizations were invited to insert brochures and handouts in a Welcome to BYU bag for incoming freshmen, campus officials removed all materials from LGBTQ organizations.

One of the purged clubs was the BYU Rainbow Collective, an organization whose stated mission is “to create and identify safe spaces for BYU’s LGBTQ+ community.”

Long Winter Brings a Bloom

Borrego Springs region comes alive with a rarely-seen super bloom of exotic flowers.
ALUMNUS AND FORMER PROFESSOR PLEDGE TO BRING NEW PERSPECTIVES

BY LILIANA ANGUANO

Corina Soto embarked on her professional career 32 years ago with a determination to bring diversity and color into leadership positions.

In November Chula Vista’s District 4 voters swept Soto into elective office for the first time after more than three decades in education and social work. She said she almost felt like coming full circle.

“The majority of people of color who get their Bachelor’s, Master’s and Doctorate degrees get their start in community colleges,” she said. “So I wanted to go to work in the community college system because that’s where our gentes are. Not just our gente but all people of color and low-income white people, this where they are.”

As an employee Soto was an outspoken member of the Southwestern College community who was an advocate for underdogs and the underrepresented.

“I strive to be a voice that’s oriented toward equity and justice as well as transparency and accountability,” she said.

She was “quick to speak truth to power,” she said, which frequently got her in hot water with college leadership. She served as a union grievance chair, where she was trained in due process and conflict resolution.

“It’s been my commitment that people have due process rights, so when I saw a consistent pattern of the administrators violating the due process rights of campus employees and students I was not going to put up with that,” she said. “For me it’s being a voice for the student body and matters we must be guided by rule of law and due process.”

Soto earned a Bachelor’s degree from UC Riverside in Chicano and Administrative Studies, then a Master’s from SDSU in education and with an emphasis in multicultural counseling and social justice. Her education and her professional experiences have given her an unwavering commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion, she said.

Southwestern College has slowly climbed

TURKISH NATIONALS ON FACULTY MOURN QUAKE DEVASTATION

BY EMILY INGCO

Earthquakes do not follow schedules.

A devastating 7.8-trembler struck the Syria-Turkey border area at 4:24 a.m. local time on Monday.

At least 15,000 died in bed. About 60,000 are known to have perished. Aftermaths of the February quake shook as far as Southwestern College, where Turkish natives Bulent Bas and Cem Tont worried about relatives in the devastated region it struck.

Poor building standards in southeast Turkey are. Not many building standards in southeast Turkey are. Not many Turkey natives Bulent Bas and Cem Tont worried about relatives in the devastated region it struck.

Bas is not alone. United Nations estimates say more than 100,000 people perished as a result of a 7.8 earthquake near the Syria-Turkey border. SC Professors Bulent Bas and Cem Tont continue to monitor the situation.

Casualty and neighboring cities were not as fortunate. Bas, a survivor of the 1994 magnitude-6.7 Northridge

TURKISH NATIONALS IN SAN DIEGO ARE DESPERATE FOR RESOURCES

BY EMILY INGCO

A 6.4-magnitude earthquake hit eastern Turkey and parts of Syria early Thursday, killing at least 90 people and injuring 800 more.

The United Nations says that more than 50,000 people have been displaced by the quake. Turkey declared a three-day mourning period.

By Sunday, the death toll had risen to 94 people. A lack of resources and coordination in the relief efforts has been a major challenge for aid organizations.

A UC Riverside and SDSU graduate, Soto taught and served as a counselor for more than 30 years at Southwestern College. She was active in the Academic Senate and is a former president of the Southwestern College Educators Association, the faculty union.

She is a strong proponent of learning communities and—managementally-sized cohorts of students from underrepresented demographics—and is urging the college to add more sections of programs like Puente, Umoja, Chicano and Slayer. While she urged support for developmental students, she also urged college leaders not to ignore gifted and talented students who have a high probability of success with the right resources.

A patriarch of the Turkish community, Bas said he was looking forward to hearing from friends and family who survived the earthquake.

Bas is not alone. United Nations estimates say more than 100,000 people perished as a result of a 7.8 earthquake near the Syria-Turkey border. SC Professors Bulent Bas and Cem Tont continue to monitor the situation.

Casualty and neighboring cities were not as fortunate. Bas, a survivor of the 1994 magnitude-6.7 Northridge earthquake that erupted around 4:30 a.m., said he was “lucky” to escape.

As the death toll rose to 94 on Sunday, Bas said he was “lucky” to escape. He said he was “lucky” to escape.

Turkey declared a three-day mourning period. The government suspended non-essential services and ordered schools closed.

The United Nations says that more than 50,000 people have been displaced by the quake. Turkey declared a three-day mourning period.

“Academia and Turkish citizens are adapting to the situation,” he said. “We are doing our best to support our Turkish colleagues and citizens.”

He said Turkey needs to make adjustments based on what it learned from the earthquake.

To assist the earthquake victims of Syria and Turkey, send contributions to the Islamic Center of San Diego, 1120 Erie Court, San Diego, CA 92112.
NEW HOPE TO PREVENT OPIOID FATALITIES

Narcan, the nasal spray that delays overdose deaths, is now available at no cost from a Chula Vista vending machine as well as the Chula Vista and National City police stations.

ACCIDENTAL DRUG MEDICATION DEATHS

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</tr>
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Source: San Diego County Open Data Portal

FREE NARCAN — This vending machine at the South Bay Regional Recovery Center, 1180 Third Avenue in Chula Vista, dispenses free naloxone starting in March, with hopes of passing out 100,000 by June.

BY RAYZLIN M. AVENDANO

COVID-19 has nearly 1.2 million Americans. So have opioids. Naloxone may be the wonder drug that saves tens of thousands of lives. Also known as Narcan, it is a fast acting nasal spray widely available at no cost in San Diego County. Opioids are a class of drugs that include heroin, fentanyl, oxycodone and morphine that likely killed 120,000 Americans last year alone. Their intended use is to treat pain, but they are highly addictive and are often fatal if used improperly. Fentanyl is the most potent of the bunch. It can be 100 times stronger than morphine and was the leading cause of opioid-related deaths in 2022, according to the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA).

Fentanyl’s power to kill is almost incomprehensible. A crystal the size of a baby aspirin can kill a person in minutes. Last month San Diego DEA agents seized a stash of smuggled fentanyl strong enough to kill every person in the United States and Caribbean.

Free naloxone kits are available in a vending machine at the McAlister Institute South Bay Regional Recovery Center at 1180 Third Avenue, about six miles from the Chula Vista campus. It is San Diego County’s first naloxone vending machine. Plans are to install 12 machines throughout the region, according to an NIDA spokesperson.

To access the medication, one needs to scan a barcode, complete a form and watch a short video demonstrating effective administration of naloxone. Naloxone is also available at the Chula Vista and National City police departments, no questions asked.

A New PATH, a Spring Valley rehabilitation organization, will deliver naloxone. The Harm Reduction Coalition of San Diego (HRCSD) reports that it has distributed more than 4,000 naloxone kits through mid-March, with hopes of passing out 50,000 by June.

Naloxone nasal spray is an FDA-approved opioid antidote to temporarily reverse the effects of an opioid overdose. It works by attaching itself to opioid receptors and inhibiting its effects. There are no negative effects on the body if administered by mistake. Naloxone is fast-acting, but temporary. It lasts for about 30 to 90 minutes, enough time to call 911.

San Diego County’s efforts are part of statewide Naloxone Distribution Project, created by the California Department of Health Care Services in 2018.

BY RAYZLIN M. AVENDANO

ON THE ROAD AGAIN — After a 21-year absence National City and other Chicano communities may soon see a return of low riders and other modified vehicles cruising the boulevards. Falsely blamed for crime and gang activity by former Governors Ronald Reagan and Pete Wilson, cruising and low riders were banned in the state. Chicano activists have argued for three decades that the ban was racist and that low riders are a harmless, enjoyable part of SoCal culture.

CRUISING BY LOWRIDERS MAY RETURN

BY RAYZLIN M. AVENDANO

NATIONAL CITY — “Let’s lend a hand,” he said. National City has officially repealed a 21-year ban on cruising that Latinos have argued for decades was racist and demeaning. Now advocates for low riders and Latino car clubs are pushing for a statewide green light for the resumption of cruise nights in Chicano communities.

“No se prohíbe” (It is not possible) rang out in the council chambers.

Celebrations continued a few days later on nearby Logan Avenue where nearly 400 lowriders and exotic cars gathered under the bridge for the 35th celebration of Chicano Park Day. Rafael Perea of the United Lowrider Coalition said the repeal of anti-cruising laws are reminiscent of the original fight for Chicano Park in 1970 and it was proper to celebrate “the community coming together... in such a sacred place.”

Legislation born in the South Bay has inspired cities like San Jose and Sacramento to repeal cruising bans. In February Assemblymember David Alvarez introduced Assembly Bill 436, which would amend the California Vehicle Code to allow cruising and the operation of height-adjusted vehicles.

Cruising, as defined by the code, is the “repetitive driving of a motor vehicle past a traffic control point” within a certain span of time. Alvarez’s bill would amend it to exclude Section 24008 — which currently gives local authorities the power to enact anti-cruising ordinances.

Alvarez said the time to end the war on lowriders has arrived. “(AB-436) would allow individuals who want to participate in cruising to do so without the threat of potentially being pulled over by law enforcement,” he said. “Currently, under the California Vehicle Code, that activity is banned in several cities throughout California.”

Alvarez said his bill would also remove Section 24018 of the code that deems vehicles modified to be lower than the rims as illegal. “The law currently says that if your vehicle is too low, you are violating state laws in the entire state, not just in different counties,” he said. “This would make cars that are lower than traditional cars legal. So it is both the car and the act of cruising and bill (addresses).”

National City enacted its cruising ban in 1992 due to stated concerns about traffic congestion and gang activity. Latino leaders including Herman Bass of the National City-based Committee on Chicano Rights scoffed at the notion that middle aged professionals who often invest $100,000 in a modified car were gangsters.

“It was anti-Chicano to the core,” he said. “No one ever died in a high-speed collision involving a lowrider.”

CRUISING • 4/11

‘AS SOCIAL AS TACOS AND THE BEACH BOYS’ — Chicano car clubs worked hard to overturn the ban on cruising and low riders, including Los Amigos, the generalized organization known for its humanitarian work.

PHOTO BY RAYZLIN AVENDANO / STAFF

CREDIT: Adobe Stock

FALSIFY BANNED FOR CRIME AND GANG ACTIVITY BY FORMER GOVERNORS RONALD REAGAN AND PETE WILSON, CRUISING AND LOW RIDERS WERE BANNED IN THE STATE. CHICANO ACTIVISTS HAVE ARGUED FOR THREE DECADES THAT THE BAN WAS RACIST AND THAT LOW RIDERS ARE A HARMLESS, ENJOYABLE PART OF SOCAL CULTURE.
New buildings struggle with heating, cooling, leaking and other construction problems

Cardenas said the heating and air conditioning problems were there at the outset. “When we first moved in, I knew that all the IT technicians (on the other side of the building) were complaining that it was too hot in there and everybody over here was freezing,” she said. “I think the A/C and heat were not working. I put in one (work) request because (the dean’s) office felt really cold.”

MELTDOWN WORRIES RETURN
Summer heat brought cold terror to IT staff, Cardenas said, when the air conditioning failed to keep a mainframe chamber cool enough. A catastrophic meltdown in 2015 was on leadership’s minds during construction of the new building. Another meltdown may have been narrowly averted.

Then there are the water issues. When Cardenas returned from winter break she said she wondered if she was dreaming when she heard it was “raining indoors.” Leaks were reported in at least two different areas of her department’s half of the building.

“There was one in John (Elder’s) office,” she said. “Same thing with (the office of) Eduardo (Diaz). There was also a leak in the office by the conference room. That one was a big leak because the ceiling tile got very wet and it fell apart. The bulletin board got stained, so they had to purchase a new one.”

She immediately submitted a Service Now request for these leaks, she said, and received help within a week. Days later, however, the leak in Diaz’s office returned as bad as ever. It was dripping right by his chair.

“For a while there, we were doing this and forth (with Facilitates personal).” He said. “Every time it rained, the leak would reappear the next day. We submitted a report, and someone would come in and work on it.”

Diaz’s ceiling still leaks and the carpet in the office has been dampened. He said it is stressful worrying about the leak, the damage it is doing to the carpet and the health hazards that can accompany wet carpeting.

Besides temperature and moisture issues, the building described as “state of the art” by its head contractor also has problems with its front door alarm going off randomly. “It’s like a damn car alarm in the parking lot at Walmart,” said an IT employee. “We’ve basically stopped paying attention to it.”

SOGGY, COLD POLICE STATION
A new $6.8 million Campus Police Station right across the street from IT is having virtually the same problems.

Chief Safety Officer Marco Bareno said when the rains began in late 2022, leaks followed. “One of the officers discovered a leak in the men’s locker room area,” he said. “Another one was in their workout area and I think the third one was in the conference room.”

SCPD Officer Mark Zleninak later reported a leak in a restroom. “I think we only found it a couple weeks ago,” he said.

Water damage has caused ceiling bubbles to pop out like a rash. Bone white paint has darkened as it absorbs water. In contrast to the speedy service Cardenas said she received in IT, the leaks in the Campus Police building were not fixed for months after the initial Service Now work request was submitted.

“I remember when they came in to check,” Bareno said. “There was a bubbling on the side of the vents, which was due to condensation on the seal of the air conditioning ducts. The damage of the condensation of the humidity and the fix of the actual physical leak was done a bit sooner. I want to say a couple of months for the fixing of the leaks. They are slowly repairing the bubbling.”

Bareno said the water issues are irritating, but did not interfere with the conduct of police business.

“It is expected when you move into a new building to have issues and kinks like that,” he said. “My only concern is health issues. A leak obviously needs to be fixed quickly because there’s the potential of leaky ceiling tiles and other health issues as well as the mess.”

HVAC FAILURES TOUGH ON STUDENTS, DANGEROUS FOR TECHNOLOGY

“When we first moved in, I knew that all the IT technicians (on the other side of the building) were complaining that it was too hot in there and everybody over here was freezing. I think the A/C and heat were not working. I put in one (work) request because (the dean’s) office felt really cold.”

— ANGELA CARDENAS, SC IT administrative assistant

“One of the officers discovered a leak in the men’s locker room area. Another one was in their workout area and I think the third one was in the conference room.”

— MARCO BARENO, SC chief safety officer

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— MICHAEL BUCKLEY, SC theater professor

“When two of the instances were covered under warranty — the Performing Arts and the IT. The HVAC issue with the Police Department was not, so the district had to fix it from the back end. Our partners and contractors help us find the solutions for whatever issues we have under warranty as well as whatever else isn’t covered.”

— LILLIAN LEOPOLD, SC Public Information Officer

“I was told when the building was first built, ‘Yeah, this will have water standing on top of the skylights, but don’t worry. They’ll be watertight.’ I thought, Really? That doesn’t sound right.”

— MICHAEL BUCKLEY, SC Theater professor
fingerprint growing over time and it can create health issues for the employees. For us, the leaks have not impacted our health and were mainly affected by the deterioration over time of the wall and ceiling for the building and the building's flooring.”

Like the IT team, campus police officers shivered in low temperatures when the heater stopped working.

“I received an email from one of my employees saying ‘hey, it’s pretty cold in here,”’ said Buckley. “I could see someone when I checked it. It was noticeably cold in here. The heater wasn’t working and the (outside) temperature was terribly low at that time. Within two days they had people working here to fix the heater issue.”

THEATER REMAINS “UNFINISHED”

Professor of Theater Michael Buckley says he still has the same lookout – and then some. Buckley the chairwoman with builders doing construction of the PAC, said the celebrated new building has at least 40 serious issues that remain unaddressed.

Leaks in the sky light roof above the tool shop are a terrible problem, Buckley said. It was also a situation he and his colleagues saw coming long before the winter rains began.

“It was told when the building was first built, ‘Yeah, this will have water standing on top of the skylights and we can’t do anything about it,’” he said. “I thought it was funny. It doesn’t sound right.”

Theater Operations Technician Brandon Waterson spotted the leaks after a storm and Buckley reported them through an online Help request. Facilities personnel fixed it, he said.

Then the real trouble began.

A hazardous leak in the theater’s control room packed with computer technology and electronics threatened a fire in a damag- ed and shutdown of the PAC.

“We had all the roof tiles out at one point,” he said. “We also had all the plastic sheeting over our stuff because this is a worthless thousands of dollars and we can’t have water dripping on it. They put in new ducts and replaced the ceiling, so it was all taken care of by the contractors.”

Many serious defects remain unaddressed, Buckley said.

“Bottom line, the building is not finished, even though we’ve been teaching here for three semesters now,” he said. “There’s a white lay (no lay) – nearly 40 items long – of things that have not been finished and have not been completed. At one point the contractor and a meeting, they told us all they could do was to see if you have any problems give us a call. However, whenever we take that on a very difficult time getting any action. The only times we really have been able to get any actions taken is when we have an administration involved. Our requests fall on deaf ears.”

BALKY DISABILITY DOORS

Not only are the doors not safe for people who use wheelchairs. Difficultly reaching the doorbell button have left some disabled guests in a lurch, he said, because they were not able to open the very front of one of the doors of the PAC. Problems with the front doors could endanger students and patrons in the event of an emergency evacuation, Buckley said. Facilities personnel had not responded to his concerns, he said, nor had the PAC.

PAC has also suffered from balmy, unforgiving temperatures, due to an unreliable HVAC system.

“The HVAC system has still not been fixed,” he said, and the problem is “extremely uncomfortable in every temperature.” Buckley said different campus classes, including students and patients in the event of an emergency evacuation, Buckley said. Facilities personnel had not responded to his concerns, he said, nor had the PAC.

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BYU • COUNT FROM PG 1

LGBTQ students and activists speak out against institutional discrimination

students.” Raynbow Collective organizes back-to-school Pride events, DEI training and a popular art show. Raynbow Collective PR Manager Haley Malevich said the move was hurtful. “(BYU’s administrators) make statements about inclusivity and loving your neighbor,” she said, “but fail to show up for the LGBTQ community and give full love only on the condition that you change who you are to fit their mold.” Malevich said LGBTQ students are starting to push back.

“We want LGBTQ students to know that they have a community that people here to encourage them and support them,” she said. “No one deserves to feel excluded or stranded with no life vest. Our goal is listen, lift and love.” Raynbow Collective partners with 14 organizations that support the greater queer community of Utah. Malevich said faculty and students are becoming more vocal in their allyship.

“Alongside our friends at the Cougar Pride Center, USGA, Equality Utah, the Out Foundation, Black Menaces, and so many others, I have seen a surge of support and love within the community and from allies to the community,” she said. “I feel like our organizations bring out the best in people. We’ve been able to create powerful, deep friendships while advocating for a better, more inclusive Utah. I’ve also seen more people stand up for the rights of those being discriminated against. It’s a beautiful thing to see so many people united in purpose.”

Grace (a pseudonym) is a freshman at BYU. She identifies as an LGBTQ Mormon, which they said is often a dichotomy difficult to reconcile. “I want to talk openly about LGBTQ topics, but I’m scared to,” they said. “None of the organizations made for queer BYU students are school affiliated and none can meet on campus. Within these groups, the LGBTQ community at BYU is very vibrant and supportive. We meet and give each other advice, comfort and resources. We warn each other which professors to avoid and also tell each other which ones are allies.”

Grace said their time at BYU has not been all bad, but they feel LGBTQ students are marginalized. “(BYU has an) Office of Belonging, but that is the only official support for encouraging diversity (I know of),” they said.

Grace said the conundrum of LGBTQ students’ attraction to BYU sometimes leads to being driven by pragmatism. “Why do queer students go to BYU?” they asked. “Why don’t they just go somewhere else? We think it’s going to be different. It’s the best choice financially. Some (students) don’t know they are queer until they’re already at BYU. Financial control by parents. Social pressure to attend.”

Grace is attending BYU for spiritual reasons, they said. Many queer students are still faithful members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, but they consider an “honor code” hostile to LGBTQ students. “Change is likely to be slow at BYU,” they said. “The honor code is that most people don’t accept. It’s a place where everyone is being exposed to LGBTQ relationships and how Disney should not pretend those relationships are normal.”

Mortenson said, “Even though many of the people I’ve met on campus are amazing and accepting of everyone, I absolutely understand how students of the LGBTQ community can feel unwelcome and unsafe at BYU. The university needs to encourage its students and faculty to be more inclusive.”

Student are modeling the way forward, they said. “BYU teaches everyone to love everyone, but I feel like there are definitely times at school where that value is not kept,” they said. “I absolutely love the students who are standing up and making the Y a safe place for everyone, I absolutely understand how students feel new relationships and how Disney should not pretend those relationships are normal.”

Mortenson said the BYU honor code is strict, held behavioral measures that ban “homosexual behavior.” BYU students are subject to the old Christian canon “love the sinner, hate the sin.”

“Most of the people I have talked with seem to be very kind and accepting of everyone. I will say, though, that there have been a few times I’ve heard very homophobic things said by students and people on campus.”

Mortenson said LGBTQ students are subject to the old Christian canon “love the sinner, hate the sin.”

“BYU’s” surround Provo, Utah community can be rough on LGBTQ students. Under the honor code, LGBTQ couples are not held hands, hug, kiss or date in public.

Mortenson cited the BYU honor code, strictly held behavioral measures that ban “homosexual behavior.” BYU students are subject to the old Christian canon “love the sinner, hate the sin.”

Mortenson said the honor code encourages straight students to rat out LGBTQ classmates. “I think the biggest issue with the honor code is that most people don’t even bother reading it, so they are just reporting whatever they deem inappropriate,” they said. “The honor code is very outdated.”

Mortenson said BYU alumni Julian Orr went viral with more than 1.6 million views when they sowed a rainbow flag into their graduation gown and flashed it on BYU’s Marriott Center Jumbo Tron after receiving their diploma. It was a violation of the honor code and could have cost their degree.

“Nobody deserves to be treated that way. It’s a beautiful thing to see so many people united in purpose.”

Pat rejects the “you know what you are getting into” rhetoric they often hear. “I did not know about the anti-LGBTQ culture,” they said. “Nobody knows what BYU is like until you’re actually on campus and seeing what’s going on.”

Pat said he made a sound financial decision. “If I had chosen my major at a different university or a different state, I would be paying student loans akin to medical school,” they said. Mortenson said BYU is a great academic university, but it needs to evolve. “There should be room for Mormon LGBTQ students fighting for a better BYU. The university’s motto, “Enter to Learn, Go Forth to Serve,” remains aspirational, they said.”

“THE university needs to learn from its minority populations,” she said. “LGBTQ students deserve a chance to pursue a better education and feel comfortable while doing so. They deserve the chance to go forth and serve their community.”
Faculty divided over elimination of remedial math and English classes

California Legislature passed Assembly Bill 795 in 2021. It pushed a student directly into transfer-level courses with the option to take developmental courses only after their performance suggests a high likelihood of not passing. Last year assemblymember Bill 795 completely eliminated remedial options. It requires community colleges to place all students into transfer-level courses, regardless of their educational background and academic achievement.

SC English Department Chair John Rieder said a majority of English faculty have embraced the law, some English faculty teaching at the same new approach is working for English students.

“My inbox is not filled with students asking me to bring back develop English,” he said. “I have not received one in three years.”

Students who seek extra help may enroll in English 115 support classes that use the Power Study Program which includes in-class tutoring, he said.

“The Power Study Program is great because the students need that in their lives. The students need to develop the foundational skills they need to get through as quickly as possible,” he said. “The longer we keep them in remedial class, the more they get frustrated.”

Not all reading and English faculty agree. Several argued that “the pendulum has swung too far in the other direction” by eliminating remedial classes and reclassifying them as non-credit offerings. Research by Promise Neighborhood warns that SC will need to enroll legal limits of students entering at below college level in reading and writing.

“We are setting lots of students up for failure,” warned a reading educator. “We need that extra chance to let them get where they want to go.”

Pathways in the mathematics department face similar challenges, according to faculty. SC students who started in transfer-level math after the passage of AB 795 saw a triple increase in completion counts, according to the California Community Colleges website. At the same time, the completion rates for Latino and Black populations have fallen, according to college data.

Dr. Silvia Nadalet, dean of the School of Math, Science and Engineering, said the college is offering corequisite classes that use the Power Study Program which includes in-class tutors, he said.

“Students should only be allowed into calculus if their foundation is good,” said Eclar. Calculus is the first transfer-level mathematics course listed on the SC catalog. She said the new legislation will not require prerequisite courses as part of the major’s requirements, placing students directly in calculus from the very beginning of the STEM pathway.

“Students should not only be allowed into calculus if their foundation is good,” she said. “But now it’s just trying to do all three levels at the same time, which I think is a horrible, horrible idea.”

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Ongoing Corruption Poisons Our College

southern College never seems to learn its lesson. Crime doesn’t pay nor does covering up crime. When a crime is committed, the perpetrator must be brought to justice, not protected, even if that person is an administrator. Especially if the person is an administrator. Let our college’s never-ending cycle of corruption trumps, on, crushing our reputation under its jackboots.

This institution’s wrongdoer history of unethical and often criminal behavior in its top ranks is sickening. The ATM scandal is not an anomaly. It is business as usual, the latest in a long series of sleazy activity that seems to be handed down from administration to administration.

The hearse of an ATM machine with three employees of the SC Grounds Department — including manager Juan Chavez — is the latest in a series of disgraceful stories no one would believe it if it wasn’t real. Chavez, Efrian Correa and Abdon Hernandez-Jimenez used a fork lift to pry an ATM machine loaded with money for FAPA students from the floor of the Student Center building. It was carted to the Grounds shop, forced open and emptied of $6,600.

Hernandez-Jimenez, the expendable hourly employee, was immediately terminated, the sacrificial lamb of the trio. The penalty for Correa, a full-time college employee, was five months paid leave and his resignation.

The penalty for Chavez? A free pass to a full retirement.

Sadly, it gets worse. College administrators kept the ATM incident tightly under wraps since September and might have gotten away with it had it not been for a laudatory governing board proclamation honoring the disgraced manager.

...BE IT RESOLVED that Juan Chavez is deserving of recognition for their dedicated years and services, and deserves the commendation of the Governing Board, administrators, faculty, staff and students of the Southwestern Community College District.

A pat on the back to Chavez and a slap in the face to Southwestern’s faculty and staff.

Sadly, reading through past issues of The Sun is a virtual crime log of venality and corruption. Southwestern College is a publically-funded feeding trough for piggish vagabond college administrators hired willy-nilly with scant (or no) background checks. A few examples:

1999: College President Tom Conte is forced to fire his friend, the VP of Affairs, after the VP swats a female student on the butt at a meeting. It was not his first example of hands-on management. Conte secretly paid the VP’s $450,000 “severance package” equal to three years pay. Conte almost got away with this gift of taxpayer funds until The Sun broke the story. He was forced to retire.

2002: President Serafin Zasurka faced 20 years in prison and a $1 million fine for spending college funds on a political campaign. He was forced to resign.

2006: The college president and two administrator pals are fired or forced to resign for sexual harassment, a case that cost the taxpayers a small fortune.

2013: In the San Diego County District Attorney’s office called the “worst corruption scandal in San Diego County history,” 12 SC administrators, governing board members and contractors were taking “gifts” from were charged with 165 felonies for corruption, bribery, extortion, perjury and grand larceny. All pleaded guilty to avoid prison. Former college president Raj Kumar Chopra and VP of Fiscal Services Nicholas Alotio led the way. Both had been charged with criminal activity at prior jobs. Eventually 22 SC administrators were fired or forced to resign.

2011-2012: A series of administrators in the Human Resources department are charged with criminal or unethical behavior and fired or forced to resign.

We could go on and on, but the question is, when does it stop?

Our leaders are supposed to be role models and people we can look up to. Our leaders are supposed to be people who ethically we try to lead our lives. It is not a good look for those who look up to us south of our border and it is certainly not a good look for those who already look down on the South County residents.

College President Mark Sodupe and former VP HR Janette McIntyre failed us big time and so did any governing board members and administrators who went along with the disgraceful ATM episode. Heads would roll at a more ethical administration.

Good leaders are supposed to make us feel safe to be ethical, contributing members of the organization. While reporting this story we have had more than a dozen employees share other stories of theft and malfeasance, but all declined to go on the record out of fear. When employees fear retaliation for spouting the truth that is clear evidence of poor leadership and a toxic culture, College employees should not be forced to protect corrupt co-workers. We remain hopeful that a few brave employees will bring forth their evidence for the record so we can see once and for all how deeply this problem goes.

We are hopeful new trustees Robert Mertens and Corina Hernandez will raise the ethical standards of our college leadership. It is time to end the quarter century of wagon circling by college administrators who protect each other no matter what. It is time to fiercely stamp out corruption at Southwestern College and to have it start from the top.

Our community deserves better. Voters in the Southwestern Community College District have passed a series of construction bonds to tax themselves nearly $1 billion so far in the 21st century. Our community loves us and needs us, but our leadership routinely betrays and defiles us with cheap venality and sleaziness.

Our community deserves better. Voters in the Southwestern Community College District have passed a series of construction bonds to tax themselves nearly $1 billion so far in the 21st century. Our community loves us and needs us, but our leadership routinely betrays and defiles us with cheap venality and sleaziness.

Our leaders are supposed to be role models and people we can look up to. Our leaders are supposed to be people who show us the way forward. Right now, though, we are ashamed of our college leaders for allowing this kind of low grade corruption to roll.

Our leadership is officially on notice. We are watching and we are so old.

Norma Hernandez in 2011 famously declared “the pay for play days at Southwestern College are over!” It is time for a new leader to declare that corruption in all of its ugly forms is over at Southwestern College and to really mean it.
COVID, construction have obliterated the once-welcoming socializing areas of Southwestern, spawning student isolation

BY FYANIE B. MURGUIA

We are the lost generation of Southwestern College. We are the COVID cohort, the Zoom Zoners and masked marauders. We are the online learners, bookworm club and the keyboard crew.

In other words, we have been cut off from each other.

So when we were finally able to bring our socially-starved selves back to campus in the fall we were bulging with hope for new friends, collaborating classmates and possibly some romantic entanglements.

Nope.

The dictum that community colleges harbor social life is true at boarded up, fenced out Southwestern. Returning to in-person classes in August was overwhelming and disappointing. Students walked in with bright eyes, fresh outfits and hopes and hopes for new friends only to realize that every campus social center was shut down due to looming construction. Our cafeteria and ASA were largely intact, but locked up and vacant. We could peer in longingly at ivory hockey tables and tangerine couches, but yellow caution tape wrapped the building like an enormous mid-century Christmas present to warn us that we could not actually use them.

Thankfully we were left with dusty tables and chairs right outside the ruins of the cafeteria, like worn stones adjacent a crumbling pyramid. They offered hope for some sort of blessed interaction, perchex as they were next to our doomed temples of socialization.

For a little while all was well, at least good enough. When midday classes let out the tables were draped with unimpressed students and buzzing with conversation.

Then everything changed – again.

At the onset of the second semester buildings and paths were sealed off by six-foot high fences, causing confused students to stumble around like hungry rats in a maze without cheese.

Southwestern had its center gouged out. Our campus heart that once swarmed with chatty friends, building, romance and graffiti now streaming their new chords is now an axe of annihilation. Southwestern's center of erosive of WVS Dresden or Hiroshima, a bombed out crater where once a thriving culture hummed.

Our once-beautiful campus is no longer a pretty site.

Not a friendly place.

Gone are the gruity but welcoming chairs and tables. We are left with our Spartan caf of limited seating for 22,071 registered students.

Our ASA was obliterated. Some members of student government give up, but others have fought on, working hard to stay relevant and make the best of a tough situation. It is to them because we dealt with a tough hand. Our ASA and our designated student gathering spot are nestled into a remote campus byway between the bookstore and the STEM building. There are a few tables dropped in there, but it is not the towering hub of social interaction we knew prior to the demolition of our beautiful Student Center.

Construction will continue for 2-3 more years at least. Our brief time as Southwestern College students is doomed to dust, grit, noise and isolation.

Unbelievable.

A great deal of thought has gone into construction, but not enough into its impact on student mental health. Our college is a collection of smart and creative people. Let's all get busy thinking of smart and creative ways to re-weave a social culture. Students need gathering places that allow conversations and comfort. We need time and space to reflect on what we are learning.

We are supposed to make lifelong friends in college, but that is not happening. That is sad and unnecessary. It also helps at a disadvantage. Our future colleagues, business partners, teammates, husbands and wives get their walkways like ships in the breadth dark.

COVID + Construction = Social Death.

Time for a new formula.

Students also need a safe and easy mechanism to report sexual assault, she said.

"Not Anymore" is a sexual assault program available through Southwestern and is a resource that aims to help (students) better understand how vitally important these issues are and what you can do to help make your campus safer and more welcoming."

It is a hot mess.

"Not Anymore" is more of the same old rhetoric that places sexual safety on former or likely victims, and is more of the same old rhetoric that places sexual safety on former or likely perpetrators and law enforcement. It spends more time talking about consequences for false claims than for consequences for sexual crime.

Long term, society needs to develop young men as allies of women, Programs like “Men Against Rape” created by Dr. Jeffrey Bucholtz speak directly to young males about things that make women feel demoted and unsafe. They can also provide strategies to avoid prediction and intervention.

Rape and sexual assault numbers in this nation are terrifying, but even worse when we peek into the data. Victims are our sisters, mothers, brothers, children, friends and anyone we call family.

America must do better to stem this epidemic.
April 21, 2023 / Issue 4 The Southwestern College Sun

CAMPUS LEADERS URGE PATIENCE DURING CONSTRUCTION

BY CAMILA A. GONZALEZ

Construction requires steel, concrete, wood, nails, dry wall ... and truckloads of patience. That is the message from campus leaders at Southwestern College who are undergoing an unprecedented transformation and suffer unprecedented challenges.

Aurora Ayala insists the dust, mud, fencing, detours and noise will all be worth it someday soon.

“With construction comes distraction and inconvenience the students and everyone in our disruption,” she said. “We ask transformation and suffers undergoes an unprecedented leadership as Southwestern College long remake of Southwestern College.

Ayala, the director of facilities, is managing the multi-pronged, decades-long remake at Southwestern College. She said the work is long overdue.

Calling Dr. Yes

“When people say Cynthia, I want to do this. How can we make it happen? My attitude is that I want to get as close to yes as we can.”

Campus Administrator of the Year: Dr. Cynthia McGregor

BY LILIANA ANGUIANO

Dr. Cynthia McGregor is not one to blow her own horn. Well, actually, that is not true.

Southwestern’s dean of the School of Arts, Communication and Social Sciences is an elite classical French horn player who once performed with the legendary rock band The Who.

It is more accurate to say that she is remarkably humble in a profession known for some outsized egos. She never told anyone on campus that she was named Administrator of the Year recently — by three organizations.

McGregor, dean of the School of Arts, Communication and Social Sciences, was named, in short order, Outstanding Administrator by the California Music Educators Association and the recipient of the Arts Empowerment Ovation Award for Creative Leadership in San Diego County Region 1. Oh, and Southwestern College Administrator of the Year by her peers.

Time management, energy and a passion for her work are constantly she has faced since becoming dean in July 2018.

A constant challenge she has faced since becoming dean in July 2018 is finding time to support as many things as she can.

“It is more accurate to say that she is remarkably humble in a profession known for some outsized egos. She never told anyone on campus that she was named Administrator of the Year recently — by three organizations.”

MUSIC OF THE NIGHT — McGregor juggles her daytime job and family while maintaining her love for the French horn, which she plays at an elite level for the La Jolla Symphony. She once performed with the legendary rock band The Who, playing many of John Entwistle’s iconic French horn lines.

CALLING DR. YES

“When people say Cynthia, I want to do this. How can we make it happen? My attitude is that I want to get as close to yes as we can.”

Ready to Move to Next Phase

The 2022 SC Facilities Plan concluded that construction is slowly exiting Phase One. This includes:

• Performing Arts Center
• Campus Police Station
• Institutional Technology
• Landscape and Nursery Technology
• Instructional Complex 1
• Student Union
• Tennis facility

Ready to move to next phase

• Facilities operations, maintenance and grounds
• Phase Two includes:
  • Remodel of the Cesar E. Chavez One-Stop Center
  • Studio Arts Complex
  • Instructional Complexes 2 and 3
  • Track and athletic support
  • Parking, Ring Road and Ring Walk
  • Possibly student and faculty housing

Photo Courtesy of Cynthia McGregor

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individual driving has a license, proper California tags and the with a vehicle has the right to drive (Avenue),” he said. “It is a public road.

CONT FROM CRUISING

Lowrider cruising and car culture in the Southwest in the late 1940s like an automatic love affair. I was

The district hires a demolition contractor, part of its responsibility is the removal of trees that are in conflict with new infrastructure and buildings,” she said. “Impacts on trees vary from project to project. We aim to eventually create a welcoming environment for our students and community.”

San Diego County will fund 5,000 mature stock of trees and to help speed up the carbon sequestration process, “read the Climate Action Plan. The City of San Diego is also turning its gaze to trees.

‘No time like the present to get started,” she said. “We are trying to plant drought tolerant plants and some that damage sidewalks and underground utilities.”

Yes” – or at least “Dr. Let’s See What We Can Do.”

A Ph.D. in music, McGregor is also an elite


cruising

Push to legalize lowiders enjoys statewide support

BY EMMA MALLY

For almost half a century SouthernCalifornia was an island of greener in fast-transforming eastern Chula Vista.

Construction has wreaked havoc with the urban forest of the Bonita Mesa. Demolition crews have removed hundreds of trees and old growth shrubs and plants, including virtually everything in the cratered core of the campus. City of San Diego is also turning its gaze to trees.

San Diego County Supervisor has gone out on

CRUISING

BY LANEY NORMAN

an Diego County Supervisor has gone out on a limb.

“Cruising is as California as State laws should embrace each other and each neighbors, they’re my friends. They’re cultural significance of cruising and

So it was out of my sight that happened at six in the morning. I’m blowing through my French horn, which is 10 feet long, just so that I exercise those muscles for 20 minutes before I walk the dogs and see my daughter to school.

So McGregor, more than most, has confessed. Unlike the James Bond villain Dr. No, McGregor said she tries to be “Dr. Yes” – or at least “Dr. Let’s See What We Can Do.”

The Department of Parks and Recreation has a geog-

GRAPHIC BY HAN PSALMA / STAFF

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GLASS ART REFLECTS HUMANITY’S BEAUTY, FRAGILITY

BY KAI GRAY

Glass, explained sculptor M. R. Hernandez, is fragile like relationships. Once broken, it is almost impossible to repair. Hernandez’s provocative “Taken to Heart” is an exhibit of glass art blown, baked and sculpted into lovely abstract works that delight and challenge viewers.

Good 3-D art is much like a performance, Hernandez said. An artist in the act of creation is akin to a performer artist on stage. Heat, tension and movement fuel the performance as the artist works. A goal of Hernandez is to examine the relationship between the artist, the art and the viewer.

“As you go about viewing something that you really have to examine (you must decide) where your eyes first go and then how you move through the piece,” he said. “And as you do that you slowly start to become part of the piece.”

“Clock of the Heart,” the large and ambitious centerpiece of the exhibition, evoked images of life that started chaotic and tangled like a flickering red neon light or tangled mass of rope. Like the page of a book, it draws your gaze from left to right before the eyes settle on a large suspended glass teardrop. It conjured the creation of life as well as the tragedies life forms experience.

“Washed Away” is to examine the relationship between the artist works. A goal of Hernandez and movement fuel the performance as the artist in the act of creation is akin to a performer artist on stage. Heat, tension and movement fuel the performance as the artist works. A goal of Hernandez is to examine the relationship between the artist, the art and the viewer.

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“Washed Away” is meant to imitate the token social actions polite people seem compelled to act in certain situations. Courteous people feel the need to applaud a performance no matter how atrocious or hideous someone grieving even if you are not actually close with them. These blown glass bulbous flowers are collected in a pile of 4-5 on a small blue pedestal, politely arranged without attachment.

“Honey Bee’s” conjures warm feelings of home with its crochet flower pattern littered with inverted neon hearts of sunny yellow. It is Midwestern in origin, but universal in emotion.

“Nice Gestures” is meant to imitate the token social actions polite people seem compelled to act in certain situations. Courteous people feel the need to applaud a performance no matter how atrocious or hideous someone grieving even if you are not actually close with them. These blown glass bulbous flowers are collected in a pile of 4-5 on a small blue pedestal, politely arranged without attachment.

Signature piece “So Happy for You” is a circular metal frame face that has refuse and glass creating its nose and smile with baskets again to represent a dancer. A denim mesh gives the appearance of both a haircut and a single tear. It is the face of a faker, the kind we put on to congratulate someone whose life really has no impact on our own. Its emoji-like construction and vanilla smoothie suggest the push bottom emotional blasts on our leukocytes that look the same whether sincere or not.

“Taken to the Heart” has plenty of heart and a peppering of soul to do what good art does – get us out of our self-contained glass bubbles into a broader world.

MAGICAL FRUIT — A sweet performance by Annabelle Ramos anchored a charming production of the cobbled Road Dahl classic “James and the Giant Peach” in the Southwestern College PAC.

“James and the Giant Peach” is a show that can leave a pit in your stomach. Roald Dahl’s starkly humorous nightmarish escape fantasy has managed to remain as wickedly relevant and controversial — as when it was first published in 1961. A Southwestern College production was sweet and joyous, transcending the peach fuzzy logic of the original book. Led by the always wonderful Annabelle Ramos as James, a team of singer/actors wormed into the hearts of the audience as anthropomorphous bugs and creepy crawlies.

An improbable story even for a children’s fantasy, ‘James and the Giant Peach’ features an orphaned boy whose parents were eaten by the world’s first known carnivorous rhinoceroses. He moved in with two wicked aunts but was liberated by a giant peach and his new bug buddies when the peach rolls into the ocean and charts a course for New York. After fruit-loving sharks start chomping at the peach, threats to sink it, the bugs devise a plan to trick seagulls into flying them to the Empire State Building.

Choreography by Kevin “Blax” Burklund kept the cast on its toes and musical directors Tracey Burkland and Imamu King squeezed the nectar from some odd but melodic songs of friendship, loss, new beginnings, trials and redemption.

Ruff Yeager has grown in his job as the theater programs go-to director. He is comfortable producing the uncomfortable and enacts at plumbing deeper meaning from source material. Dahl has been a lightning rod in post-reasonable America for some un-PC language. “Peach” has been edited and censored like “Huckleberry Finn” and “Fifty Shades of Grey,” and recent productions have been boycotted for allegedly being “pro drag.” Yeager’s unapologetic “Peach” was a sign of sanity during a time of rising rightwingers nationalism and cultural warfare in the United States.

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"As you go about viewing something that you really have to examine (you must decide) where your eyes first go and then how you move through the piece,” he said. “And as you do that you slowly start to become part of the piece.”

"Clock of the Heart,” the large and ambitious centerpiece of the exhibition, evoked images of life that started chaotic and tangled like a flickering red neon light or tangled mass of rope. Like the page of a book, it draws your gaze from left to right before the eyes settle on a large suspended glass teardrop. It conjured the creation of life as well as the tragedies life forms experience.

“Washed Away” is meant to imitate the token social actions polite people seem compelled to act in certain situations. Courteous people feel the need to applaud a performance no matter how atrocious or hideous someone grieving even if you are not actually close with them. These blown glass bulbous flowers are collected in a pile of 4-5 on a small blue pedestal, politely arranged without attachment.

“Honey Bee’s” conjures warm feelings of home with its crochet flower pattern littered with inverted neon hearts of sunny yellow. It is Midwestern in origin, but universal in emotion.

“Nice Gestures” is meant to imitate the token social actions polite people seem compelled to act in certain situations. Courteous people feel the need to applaud a performance no matter how atrocious or hideous someone grieving even if you are not actually close with them. These blown glass bulbous flowers are collected in a pile of 4-5 on a small blue pedestal, politely arranged without attachment.

Signature piece “So Happy for You” is a circular metal frame face that has refuse and glass creating its nose and smile with baskets again to represent a dancer. A denim mesh gives the appearance of both a haircut and a single tear. It is the face of a faker, the kind we put on to congratulate someone whose life really has no impact on our own. Its emoji-like construction and vanilla smoothie suggest the push bottom emotional blasts on our leukocytes that look the same whether sincere or not.

“Taken to the Heart” has plenty of heart and a peppering of soul to do what good art does – get us out of our self-contained glass bubbles into a broader world.

MAGICAL FRUIT — A sweet performance by Annabelle Ramos anchored a charming production of the cobbled Road Dahl classic “James and the Giant Peach” in the Southwestern College PAC.

“James and the Giant Peach” is a show that can leave a pit in your stomach. Roald Dahl’s starkly humorous nightmarish escape fantasy has managed to remain as wickedly relevant and controversial — as when it was first published in 1961. A Southwestern College production was sweet and joyous, transcending the peach fuzzy logic of the original book. Led by the always wonderful Annabelle Ramos as James, a team of singer/actors wormed into the hearts of the audience as anthropomorphous bugs and creepy crawlies.

An improbable story even for a children’s fantasy, ‘James and the Giant Peach’ features an orphaned boy whose parents were eaten by the world’s first known carnivorous rhinoceroses. He moved in with two wicked aunts but was liberated by a giant peach and his new bug buddies when the peach rolls into the ocean and charts a course for New York. After fruit-loving sharks start chomping at the peach, threats to sink it, the bugs devise a plan to trick seagulls into flying them to the Empire State Building.

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SPORTS

Campus Sports • Features • Alternative Sports

RESPECTED WRITER AXED FOR CALLING OUT NFL

BY JULIO RODRIGUEZ

Decorated author and NFL journalist Jim Trotter was fired by the NFL Media group for speaking truth to power one too many times.

Trotter, the former Sports Illustrated NFL writer and San Diego Union-Tribune football columnist, challenged NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell on the lack of diversity in the NFL’s Newsroom at the State of the League address prior to the Super Bowl. It was the second consecutive year Trotter had raised the issue.

In March Trotter was informed that his contract was not being renewed.

“Some personal news: This will be my final week with the NFL Media Group.” Trotter tweeted. “I was informed over the weekend that my contract is not being renewed. I thank NFL Network and NFL.com for the lessons learned and affirmed over the last five years.”

Trotter asked Goodell about the lack of Black professionals in senior positions and full-time news desk positions within NFL Media. Goodell’s response was rather vague, as he tried to deflect responsibility and make the case the diversity has improved in The League.

BASEBALL • PG 14

TWO-WAY STAR MADISON MENDEZ IS SOFTBALL’S SHOHEI OHTANI, A SLUGGING STRIKEOUT PITCHER.

BY JUAN HERRERA

Southwestern College’s venerable Jaguar Junction is Jerry Barton’s hand-made stadium and pitcher’s paradise thanks to cool, damp spring weather and MLB dimensions. The House That Barton Built has unexpectedly become a hitter’s haven, at least for the free-swinging Jaguars of 2022-23.

Hitting a lofty .291 into late April, the Jaguars have ridden their hot hitting and just-enough pitching to craft a 21-15 record (15-7 in conference) on their way to a likely playoff spot in May.

SC’s recent 11-5 win against San Diego Mesa College was another bats-bests-bullpen game, the kind that has kept the scoreboard operators on their toes.

James Taylor, Benji Solano, Adrian Hinojosa and Andres Contreras led a balanced offense that scored in every inning but the first. Contreras, the brawny DH, doubled and hit a long homerun to cap the scoring against Mesa’s blown out bullpen.

FEATURED GAMES

SOUTHWESTERN 4, SAN BERNARDINO 3

Bella Hurtado’s seventh inning sacrifice fly and a stellar complete game by Madison Mendez propelled SC to a 4-3 victory over San Bernardino in front of a boisterous home crowd.

FULL PLATE

TWO-WAY STAR MADISON MENDEZ IS SOFTBALL’S SHOHEI OHTANI, A SLUGGING STRIKEOUT PITCHER.

BY JUAN HERRERA

Softball, the most poorly named of all sports, is anything but soft on the fields of Southwestern College. The Lady Jaguars have repeatedly shown that the sport is fast, daring, athletic, thrilling and, well, hard.

SC has been hard on its opponents this spring as it swung, pitched and picked its way toward the playoffs. A deep and talented squad has a long lineup and a wide array of pitchers backed by slick defenders. Madison Mendez is a South County Shohei Ohtani with a blazing fastball on the mound and power to all fields at the plate. When she is on the mound anything can happen.

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BASEBALL • PG 15

REACHING FOR THE POST-SEASON

After slow starts, SC’s baseball and softball teams have picked up momentum and are pushing for the playoffs.

PHOTO-COURTESY OF ABE PHOTOGRAPHY

Photo Courtesy of Abe Photography

Photo Courtesy of Abe Photography
Lady Jaguars return the favor
Lady K was unhittable and Lady Dons like a weed whacker broke for the plate. She scored, 10 feet down the line as Harper Hurtado followed with a single. Garcia drove in Allen and long 3-run homer over the left-center scoring two and giving the Jags the lead. The Lady Jaguars first run in the 4th and six pitches in the 4th. Martinez into scoring position and Martinez came into run for the Jags. Oceguera hammered a single to center scoring Beatty. Mendez reached on an error in the 6th and 7th for another scoring two and giving the Jags the lead. The Lady Jaguars first run in the 4th and six pitches in the 4th. Martinez into scoring position and Martinez came into run for the Jags. Oceguera hammered a single to center scoring Beatty. Mendez reached on an error in the 6th and 7th for another complete game victory.

Lady Jaguars
BY ALEXA LIMA

COURTING A BRIGHT FUTURE — Southwestern’s closed and won tennis courts will soon be replaced with a comprehensive facility for the women’s team and the community. A Non-Disclosure Agreement. Trotter has left the NFL, with dignity and class, but my go no quote.

TROTTER • FROM PGT 2

by the new, larger center. Trotter is an active member of the San Diego Association of Black Journalists and 2020 Grand Marshal of the Bonitafest. He has visited the San Diego Association of Black Journalists and 2020 Grand Marshal of the Bonitafest. He has visited the Southwestern College on several occasions to mentor students at the college. Trotter’s legal options remain open, though he has decided to answer questions about the women’s team getting cut, she said. "A new era is about to begin." Trotter’s legal options remain open, though he has decided to answer questions about the women’s team getting cut, she said. "A new era is about to begin." Trotter’s legal options remain open, though he has decided to answer questions about the women’s team getting cut, she said. "A new era is about to begin." Trotter’s legal options remain open, though he has decided to answer
Jaguars overcome 7-run deficit with fierce 10-run rally

SC’s pitching once again did enough to win. Starter Jaden Wilcox pitched into the 5th inning, but surrendered the lead as he showed signs of fatigue. Adrian Sanchez was ready to take the baton. The crafty reliever stranded the threat and closed out the game.

SC’s half century rivalry with the Grossmont Griffin was a twin win for Nature Mother, who forced back the 7-run deficit with following rainouts. It was a long but productive day for the batters on both teams, each of which scored 12 runs in the doubleheader split.

Grossmont made another mistake last night and didn’t do enough to win. Starter Jaden Wilcox emerged victorious. His five straight Ks in the bottom of the 9th by striking out the side. His big break, though, came at a highly-regarded college. He was drafted by the Griffins on Monday to play in the college’s first game.

Southwestern deployed its 15th round trying to stay on the outside that were looking sluggish as the snails were unable to keep up with the 7-run deficit with the Griffins on Monday. They were like staggered boxers that were unable to get back in the ring. A second time as SC batted around the bases loaded in the bottom of the 8th, Southwestern deployed its second pinch hitter of the inning, but surrendered the lead for scores of selfies with the women’s soccer team won the league championship in the fall. So cool.

JOHNNY JAGUAR:Yeah, it’s pretty cool. I get paid to be nice and to cheer people up.

JOHNNY JAGUAR:Well, you know, the usual mascot stuff. Some grumpy kid pulls my tail or the time someone spilled a Juice Adventure or the time will come. Have a little faith in yourself and the right message. The vibe is important, dudes, so I’m also doing my best to make my homies proud.

JOHNNY JAGUAR:Well, yeah, I was a kid prowling around the stadium that were slowly heading off in a variety of directions with no specific purpose.

JOHN Paul (‘Juanito’) Jaguaje spent countless hours stalking the alleys of Liga Mexico soccer pitches learning at the paws of his famous uncle. His big break, though, came when a highly-regarded college professor went to mesoamerica to study Mayan culture and spotted Juanito ambling up the side of Chicen Itza. A long, strange adventure was about to unfold.

The Sun was granted an exclusive tongue-in-cheek April interview with Johnny Jaguar following a Southwestern College women’s tennis match. This interview was lightly edited for space and clarity.

JOHNNY JAGUAR: ‘I’m a little bit cheerleader, a proud.

JOHNNY JAGUAR: I say go for it! If you have the commitment and are willing to put into the time and energy to learn the profession, you can do it. It’s not easy, I mean, you have to work up the sh*t, something that fits with the culture of your community. There’s studying to do, for sure. And a lot of that is intuition, that gut feeling. Great mascots make thousands of decisions at every appearance. This is a time to be crazy like a football head, or should I call it a little, like at commencement. Can’t really be classed as ‘Pomp and Circumstance,’ verandah. Respect the profession and pay your dues. Your time will come. I have a little faith in yourself and you can be a success.

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Voices In Our Communities

SUPER BLOOM PAINTS DESERTS

BY CAMILA A. GONZALEZ

“A flower blooming in the desert proves to the world that adversity, no matter how great, can be overcome.” — Matshona Dhliwayo

ANZA BORREGO DESERT STATE PARK — Super blooms — the improbable blanketing of vibrant, brittle flowers over the unforgiving expanse of harsh desert — seem more rumor than real.

This month they are real. From the sky scratching Grapevine mountain pass at Fort Tejon, to the high deserts of Lancaster, to the alluvial lowlands of Borrego Springs, flowers have shown themselves in planes of peach, valleys of vermilion and washes of wisteria.

Southern California’s record rains painted rainbows in the sky and the desert floor of Anza Borrego Desert State Park. Nature lovers, Instagram models, locals and flower tourists often wait years between super blooms, but the wait is over. This year’s bloom may be one of the greatest ever seen.

Anza Borrego is only about 90 miles from Chula Vista, but it is a long and winding road. Bloomers should be prepared for heat and cold as Anza Borrego is fickle as a sleepy toddler. Local merchants get rich selling interlopers sun screen, hats, water, sports drinks, jackets and snacks in addition to scorpion pops, chocolate rocks and local delicacies.

Galleta Meadows on County Highway S 22, with its towering sculpture of rusty dragons, eagles, elephants, scorpions and other animal figures, is a beauty and the beasts visage straight out of “Lord of the Rings.” It is a triple digit Land of Oz with plenty of safe places to park that requires very little walking.

Sturdy hikers ought to enjoy the Cactus Loop Trail on Yaqui Pass Road, home to barrel cactus and devil chollas bursting forth with blooms the color of frozen Gatorade.

Southern California’s magnificent flowers can hide away for decades at a time, so procrastination is unwise. Mother Nature’s festival of flowers must close soon.

BORREGO BOUQUET — Normally dry and generally barren of color, the Anza-Borrego Desert is carpeted with flowers and cactus blooms that spread for miles in every direction.

COMING OUT PARTY — Cactus and other desert plants that might stay semi-dormant for years staged an epic bloom this spring. Biologists say steady winter rains with just enough periods of sunshine provided perfect conditions for a rare ‘super bloom’ up and down Southwestern California, including its often-roasting lowland deserts.
Women gather in Tijuana to protest Mexico’s unchecked femicide crisis that is killing about 4,000 women, teens and little girls every year.

MEXICO’S WOMEN FIGHT FEMICIDE

BY AILYN DUMAS AND NICOLETTE MONIQUE LUNA

TIJUANA — Mexico’s women are fighting mad and fighting back.

There is so much to fight against. International human rights organizations and law enforcement estimate that between 80,000 and 100,000 Mexican women and girls are missing. Amnesty International investigators say at least 10 women and girls are killed every day in Mexico, about 3,650 every year. The Mexican government, after years of denial, says the number may be as high as 4,000 a year.

Mexico’s war on its own women has gone unabated for nearly a quarter of a century since mass graves were discovered on the outskirts of Ciudad Juarez. Tijuana is also an epicenter of femicide, according to Amnesty International. Victims include grandmothers, pregnant women, teenagers and even young children.

More than 1,000 vocal women and teens marched on the mayor’s residence in Tijuana on International Women’s Day to demand an end to Mexico’s cancerous femicide epidemic. Men were not allowed. Male party crashers were chased away.

Women warriors gathered at a Tijuana monument called “Las Tijeras” (the scissors) to share their personal stories of violence. Nearly 70 percent of Mexican women 15 and older report they have been victims of violence by men.

Speakers streamed to the microphone to recount horrifying episodes of violence suffered by themselves or members of their families.

MARCH • PG B3

PHOTO BY AILYN DUMAS / STAFF

MEXICO’S WOMEN FIGHT FEMICIDE

As victims of the Mexican femicide are younger and younger, so are the protesters. This year’s Tijuana Women’s March included more children and teenagers than ever before.
POIN TED MESSAGES FOR RAPISTS AND MURDERS — (l) "Abandon your Eve and liberate your Lilith! I will not grow up with fear!" Just like your fucking monuments. "For my mother who went to work for me. A policeman took her from me. I was only 8 months old."
Mexico's war on its own women has gone unabated for nearly a quarter of a century since mass graves were discovered on the outskirts of Ciudad Juarez. Tijuana is also an epicenter of femicide, according to Amnesty International.

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“No es normal que te odien,” (‘It is not normal to have a history of abuse,’) "No es una muerte más,” (‘Not one more death,’) "Sólo tenía 8 años” (‘I was only eight years old,’) "Estabas enfermo,” (‘You were sick bastard!’) "No eres mi mamita,” (‘I am not your hot mama. If I was I would have aborted you fucking asshole coward,’) "Cuando mis hermanas regresen limpien su pared.” (‘When my sisters come back I will clean your wall.’)

“I believe you! You are not alone!” was the response from the crowd after each testimonial. Emotion was palpable. The throng was absolutely silent as the speakers shared their stories of abuse and pain.

“We are not your playthings! We are not disposable!” declared one of the speakers. Protesters blamed Mexico’s hyper-machismo culture for the chronic abuse of its female population. It begins at birth, said a marcher, when many baby boys are treated like entitled princes and little girls are treated as lesser-than whose purpose in life is the pleasure the males, even if that includes abuse, rape and murder. Stir in the hyper-violence of drug cartels, corrupt police and dishonest elected officials, and Mexico is a recipe for disaster for its women and girls.

“The irony is that our own mothers are often part of the problem, teaching boys to devalue women,” said Maestra (a pseudonym). “Fathers, sons and uncles often treat women like servants and sex objects, even their own daughters and sisters. We need to break this cycle of dysfunction and violence. It’s only getting worse.”

A speaker underscored these words as she told the sordid tale of an uncle that forced her to have sex with him for years, starting when she was a little girl.

“The rest of my own family didn’t believe me,” she said. “They believed him and took his side every time.”

Tijuana’s protesters said they were the lucky ones — they are still alive. “Las Tijeras” was soon festooned with Day of the Dead-style altars to commemorate the dead and the missing. Posters with photographs of dead and missing women covered the area and a clothesline became a string of photographs, handmade art and posters that proclaimed “No Olvidadas!” (‘You are not forgotten.’)

At 4 p.m. the rally became a march as marchers took to the crumbling streets of Tijuana. Then a surprise— police who in previous years had stood aside and watched the marchers took a more aggressive approach. They began to cordon off streets and roadways in an attempt to box in the crowd. One police officer even backed his car recklessly right into the crowd in an attempt to turn the women around. It did not work.

Marchers refused to retreat and instead marched upon the Tijuana mayor’s residence for a spirited series of chants and some spray painted demands. Police behaved aggressively toward the women, but none backed down. The crowd sealed off the “Palacio Municipal” for about two hours before returning to “Las Tijeras” for a final call to action.

“Ni una mas! Ni una mas matanza!” (‘Not one more! Not one more murder!’) shouted the throng as the throng snaked its way through the houses and buildings caked in primary colors on the bloody streets of Tijuana.

Mexico’s women are tired of being pushed around. Now they are pushing back.

“I believe you! You are not alone!” was the response from the crowd after each testimonial. Emotion was palpable. The throng was absolutely silent as the speakers shared their stories of abuse and pain.
RAISED FISTS, RAISED VOICES — (top r) ‘Return to me my daughter!’ Featured colors of the march were purple and red, representing bruises and blood. International human rights organizations and law enforcement estimate that between 80,000 and 100,000 Mexican women and girls are missing.